



**Johnson: Army spouse takes first Olympic gold.**

*"I knew  
a year  
ago that  
my event  
would be  
first and  
that I had  
a chance  
to win  
gold."*

**A**N Army spouse was the first athlete to strike gold in the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

**Nancy Johnson**, the wife of SSG Kenneth Johnson, scored 9.9 points to break a first-place deadlock on her 10th and final shot in the women's 10-meter Air Rifle finale. She defeated Korea's Cho-Hyun Kang, 497.7 to 497.5, in a climactic frenzy for the first gold medal of the XXVIIth Olympiad at Cecil Park Shooting Centre.

Johnson considered this her redemption for finishing a disappointing 36th at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta.

"To be able to hold on and constantly move up is a good feeling," she said. "There was a group of us in there with the same score, so it was anybody's game. I usually keep track of where I am, but the scoreboard was above my head and I was looking into the lights every time I looked up. So I stopped looking."

On the final shot, Johnson fired a 9.9 to runner-up Kang's 9.7.

"I had to finish strong," said Johnson,

whose father introduced her to shooting at age 15. "I wanted to try archery, but that sport wasn't available to me. There was, however, a local rifle club."

Johnson climbed the ranks of the air rifle elite, keenly aware that air rifle would be the first event on the 2000 Olympic Games calendar.

"You know as an air-rifle shooter that your event is always going to be first, no matter what Olympics you're competing in," she explained. "I knew a year ago that my event would be first and that I had a chance to win gold. In my qualifying round, I was a little nervous and a little tense."

"I just got over it, went out there with a smile on my face and did my best," Johnson said. "I just wanted to get through it and score a lot of 10s. I had no idea that it was so close. I really wasn't paying attention to anybody else."

Her husband, who competes in the same event for the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, said his unit "adopted" Nancy.

"She's been training at Fort Benning, Ga., the last three years," Kenneth said. "She trains with the Army and works with the Army coach. She's part of our team, in a loose sort of way."

"The U.S. Army Recruiting Command is very interested in her because she's my wife and they want to show that husbands and wives can do things in the Army together," said Johnson, who's been training in air rifle for 17 years, compared to his wife's 15 years.

Nancy's confidence soared knowing she had the Army in her corner, Johnson said.

"Bill Krilling, the Army coach, has been instrumental in my success," Nancy said, "as have others at Fort Benning." But between rounds during the competition, Nancy turned to her husband for advice.

"I didn't say anything magical, but at the same time, I think I knew what to say," he said. "Ultimately, she was the one who pulled the trigger. And she's just beside herself right now." — *Tim Hipps, U.S. Army Community & Family Support Center*

**I**n related Olympic news, **SFC Todd Graves**, another member of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, became the first U.S. men's skeet shooter since 1984 to win an Olympic medal.

On hand for his third consecutive Olympic Games, and his award of the Bronze medal, were his wife, Tracy, and his mother, Tommie.

"I've been with him ever since he started shooting at age 11," Tommie, said. "I carted him all over the country when he was shooting in American trap. This is my proudest moment, except for when he was born. He's my only child."

"But this is the first time I've been seated in the stands while he competed,"



Tommie continued. "I'm always peeking from behind the stands, because I get so nervous I can't sit still. My husband asked me why I wanted to go to Australia. He said: 'You won't be watching Todd anyway.' But I made myself watch him."

As she watched her son compete, an Australian woman gave her a little koala bear for good luck, Tommie said. Todd then shot 50 straight points, and the woman returned to get his autograph.

Graves was in medal contention after firing the first 75 rounds of the two-day Olympic event. He then obliterated all 25 clay pigeons and fired two rounds of 24 for a six-way tie for third place. After two more qualifying rounds, the top six advanced to the finals.

In the medal round, Graves missed a target from station 5, leaving him a 1-point cushion for the bronze — provided he didn't miss again. He then gunned down all the pigeons from three remaining stations to capture the bronze with 122 points. Ukrainian Mykola Milchev scored the gold medal with 125 points, setting an



**Graves: Bronze medallist.**

Olympic finals record and tying the world record in the process. Petr Malek of the Czech Republic earned the silver with 124 points.

"This is huge for us, huge for our program," said USAMU commander COL Arch Arnold. "SFC Todd Graves' life has just changed. He's going to find himself on a media tour all around the Army and all around the nation. We will capitalize on his notoriety to help the recruiting effort." — *Tim Hipps*

**MAJ R. Clay Brock Jr.**, a full-time supervisory flight instructor and flight-operations officer from the 34th Infantry Division's Aviation Brigade, headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., recently competed in the Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Hawaii.

The annual competition — which begins at 7 a.m. and ends at midnight — requires competitors to swim 2.4 miles, bicycle 112 miles and run a 26.2-mile marathon.

Brock, among some 50,000 triathletes from more than 50 countries who tried out for the famous endurance event, was the only member of the National Guard to qualify, said Army Sports Office spokeswoman Trishe Boutin-Jacobs.

Brock earned a place in the competition during one of 19 worldwide qualifying races, the Florida Ironman, after competing against nearly 1,700 entrants for one of

1,500 slots worldwide. Of the 1,500 positions, 14 are reserved for his age group, 35-39. Brock placed 6th for his age group in Florida.

An eight-year National Guard veteran, Brock recently joined the Minnesota Guard after serving in the Virginia National Guard. He's participated in triathlons for two years, bringing to the competition a strong background as a swimmer and runner.

He started swimming at age 12, and swam in high school and for Texas A&M University. He also competed on the U.S. Army team while on active duty in 1984.

After leaving active duty, Brock focused on running to stay in shape. He enjoyed it so much that he tried out for and became a member of the National Guard Bureau marathon team.

"I signed up for a half marathon and got beat, but I kept training and signed up for the Florida Ironman," said Brock. All that training paid off.

"My goal in the Ironman is to be in the top 10 in the Hawaii competition," said Brock, who recently turned 40. The National Guard has fully supported Brock's training, he said, crediting members of the Guard in Virginia and Minnesota.

Weekdays Brock trains about three hours a day, mixing up the training between cycling and running, the two main activities of the race. Within three months of the race, he worked to build stamina for the swim and run, and he trained with weights three times a week. — *MAJ Pauline M. Geraci, 34th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office*



SPC Anna Lewicki

**Brock: Triathlete.**

*Weekdays Brock trains about three hours a day, mixing up the training between cycling and running, the two main activities of the race.*